



HOUSE OF CONGRESS (ARGENTINE).

ARGENTINE'S RULER

President Roca Will Hold the Reins for Six Years.

WHAT SORT OF MAN HE IS

Some Queer Things About the Government of the Country.

CONGRESS AND THE BANKS

(Copyrighted, 1898, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

Special Correspondence of The Evening Star.

BUENOS AYRES, November 20, 1898.

I WANT TO TELL you something about the new president of the Argentine.

He has been in office only a few weeks, but his strong right hand is already felt in every part of the republic.

He has begun a settlement with the Chileans as to the boundary question, and has at the same time ordered the new vessels from Europe in case the settlement should not come off.

President Roca has long been noted as one of the strongest men in South American politics.

He has been minister of war and has made himself noted as a general in the Argentine army.

It was largely due to him that Patagonia was thrown open to settlement, and he has the reputation of being a great Indian fighter.

When he was minister of war, now more than twenty years ago, he led an army to Patagonia against the Indians and conquered them.

I have heard it said that the victory was easily won and that the fighting was mere butchery on the part of the Argentines, the so-called savages making no resistance.

However this may be, President Roca got great fame from his campaign, and he is today looked upon as the greatest general of the Argentine Republic.

Roca has the confidence of the country, with enough nerve to carry out his ends without regard to who goes down before him.

He is a very quiet man. He possesses the golden gift of silence, and believes in the old Spanish proverb which says that "silence will not go into a shut mouth."

A Stable Government Promised.

Roca's election means that matters will be stable in the Argentine for six years to come.

The president is, you know, elected for six years, and he reigns that long provided there is no revolution.

Roca has the army behind him, and he will not tolerate opposition.

He has always been a fighter. He has at the same time been a diplomat, and his cabinet has been chosen with the idea of harmonizing the factions.

He has the confidence of the foreign capitalists, who believe that he will maintain peace, and peace in the Argentine means progress.

President Roca is now fifty-five years of age. He comes of a good family, being a native of the province of Tucuman in the northern part of the republic.

He is a straight, well-formed, broad-shouldered man, with a face that would not look for an American than an Argentine. You would imagine him a descendant of Anglo-Saxons rather than of Latins.

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which we shall call "Munoz," when my friend, Mayor Munoz, is dead.

"Oh, yes, I remember," replied the mayor. "But if he is dead that is all the better. He can now make no fuss as to how his vote is cast."

An Overgrown Country.

This corruption in politics extends throughout the republic.

Every province has its political factions, the most of which are connected with the ring in Buenos Ayres and take their cue from it.

The government is entirely in the hands of the native Argentines, who are natural politicians and who work the business for what it is worth.

The result is that in a country which has a population about that of the state of Ohio there are, in addition to a body of federal officers, fifteen senators, fifteen chambers of deputies, and a number of revenue collectors.

There are small officials without number, all of whom receive salary, and most of whom add to this in some way or other.

By law, all of the provinces are in debt, and only a few of them pay their interest.

The country now owes more than \$100,000,000, and the 1895 provincial debts, including unpaid interest, amounted to more than \$137,000,000.

A large number of the provinces have to be assisted by the central government to pay the salaries of their own officials.

Roca believes in centralization of power, and he has begun a settlement with the Chileans as to the boundary question, and has at the same time ordered the new vessels from Europe in case the settlement should not come off.

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take it and lost the whole, and the bank was never repaid.

Orders like this for money from public officials were frequently given to this bank. The bank was a good one to receive the money was seldom questioned, although his notes were taken in exchange for the cash.

The bank would accept drafts twenty or thirty times greater than those which its directors authorized.

One of the directors was always to be bought by a bribe. False balance sheets were periodically published to deceive the public, and dividends which had never been earned were paid out of the bank capital.

The bank at the start had a capital of \$8,000,000. Ten years later this was raised to about \$20,000,000, and it had afterwards increased to \$30,000,000. In one year its deposits were \$23,000,000, and its loans about \$12,000,000.

It had in its vaults \$132,000,000 of national treasury bills, and had saved the government from the loss of \$1,400,000,000.

The bank went down in the panic, as did other banks of similar character.

One was a mortgage bank, and the other was a bank of deposits. The government was also interested in this, and many a swamp lot was used as security for a \$10,000 loan.

Today such banks have passed away and the man who makes money out of the government must do so either through bribery or through the getting of fat contracts.

Big Public Jobs.

Buenos Ayres has many fine public buildings. It has as fine steamship docks as can be found anywhere in the world, and it is now building a great structure to correspond with our National Capitol at Washington.

I do not know the exact amount of money that is to be spent upon this. Some of the public buildings are erected by extravagant beyond description.

Take, for instance, the water works. The houses of the rich millionaires of New York have no finer fixtures about their mansions than the material which forms the outside of this great public building.

The structure covers four acres, and this whole block is faced, not with marble, but with silver.

Salvage—the money paid for rescuing ships and their cargoes—is probably the most difficult question to decide equitably that comes before courts.

There are remarkable and altogether startling in their variety to a layman with an idea of infallibility of law courts, and even the general principles remain unsettled.

For instance, it is held by one judge that salvage should be paid only when a ship is saved from certain danger; another says that it should be paid when a ship is disabled and is in danger of being lost.

The percentage allowed to salvors rises from 5 to 50 per cent, according to the value of the wreck and the skill of the service rendered.

practically the whole of the rescued cargo and the ship are made over to the salvor.

A Celebrated Case.

Something like this happened last spring in the celebrated case of the *Lamington*, a British steamship that stranded on Long Island coast.

Tugs pulled her off and she was finally sold in New York, a badly battered wreck, for \$17,500.

The work of rescue was so arduous that the district court gave the entire ship and cargo to the salvors.

The court decided that the cargo should be a margin for the owner of a lost ship, and awarded \$50,000.

In the old days, before steamships and sailing vessels, the cargo was made up of such things as sugar, coffee, and other valuable commodities.

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PROFIT IN SALVAGE

How Ships Often Make Large Sums for Their Owners.

SOME FAMOUS CASES ON RECORD

Season Has Been a Lucky One for Wrecking Companies.

ASSESSING THE DAMAGES

Written for The Evening Star.

THE SOVEREIGN, a large four-master, grounded on Jersey Beach in 1892.

She was loaded with silver specie, and when she was wrecked she was worth \$1,000,000.

The master saw that the ship was doomed, and he had the heads knocked out of the barrels and told the men to help themselves to the coin.

Their greediness cost them their lives, for when they jumped for the shore the silver in their pockets pulled them down and drowned them.

Then the wily master, who had swum ashore without any of the spoil, collected the bodies, emptied the pockets and thus saved the most valuable part of his cargo.

The story is a simple one, but not so the question of who was entitled to the salvage, which perplexed a generation of lawyers.

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